

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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R 271402Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 0674

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 0763

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP, GJ,BB,KS

SUBJ: VISIT BY GRENADIAN PRIME MINISTER TO SOUTH KOREA

1. GRENADIAN PRIMIN ERIC M. GAIRY HAS INFORMED US THAT HE WILL PAY A VISIT TO SOUTH KOREA, BEGINNING END THIS WEEK. ACCORDING TO GAIRY, HE WILL BE A GUEST OF ROK. ACCOMPANYING PRIMIN ARE MISS GLORIA PAYNE, PERMANENT SECRETARY FOR PLANNING IN PRIMIN'S OFFICE, AND HENRY BULLEN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF FINANCE.

2. COMMENT: GAIRY HAS BEEN IMPORTANT FIGURE ON GRENADIAN POLITICAL SCENE FOR LAST 24 YEARS AND HAS HEADED GOG UNINTERRUPTEDLY SINCE 1967. HE LED ISLAND STATE TO INDEPENDENCE IN FEBRUARY 1974 AND BECAME FIRST PRIME MINISTER OF INDEPENDENT GRENADA. UNDER HIS RULE, LEGAL OPPOSITION HAS VIRTUALLY DISAPPEARED AS A FACTOR IN POLITICAL EQUATION; LOCAL BLACK POWER GROUP HAS GAINED STRENGTH AND ACCORDING TO SOME OBSERVERS, BECOME INCREASINGLY RADICAL; BOTH THIS GROUP AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY, MOST OF WHOSE MEMBERS OPPOSE GAIRY, HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO HARASSMENT BY GOON SQUADS REPORTEDLY OPERATING UNDER PRIMIN'S AEGIS; INDUSTRY BOARDS CONTROLLING MARKETING OF LEADING EXPORT CROPS--BANANAS, NUTMEGS, AND COCOA -- HAVE BEEN TAKEN OVER BY GOG; DRASTIC DECLINE IN TOURISM HAS FORCED CLOSURE OF SEVERAL HOTELS; UNEMPLOYMENT
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HAS REACHED LEVELS EXCEEDING 50 PERCENT; MAINTENANCE OF LAW AND

ORDER HAS DETERIORATED; AND RELATIONS WITH BRITISH, AND, TO LESSER EXTENT, WITH US HAVE SOURED. A SELF-STYLED MYSTIC, GAIRY PROFESSES TO BE "INSPIRED" BY GOD. HE NEITHER SEEKS NOR ACCEPTS ADVICE FROM SUBORDINATES AND, THOUGH POSSESSED OF ONLY LIMITED EDUCATION AND AVERSE TO HARD WORK, TRIES TO RUN WHOLE GOVERNMENT APPARATUS HIMSELF. DESPITE HIS CLAIMS TO A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ALMIGHTY AND HIS MARRIAGE TO A WOMAN WHO IS HIS SOCIAL AND INTELLECTUAL SUPERIOR (AND A MEMBER OF HIS CABINET), HE IS AN INVETERATE SKIRT-CHASER AND EXPENDS MUCH TIME AND ENERGY IN PURSUIT OF NEW CONQUESTS.

3. WE UNDERSTAND THAT GAIRY, IN EFFECT, INVITED HIMSELF. APPARENTLY, ROK EXTENDED INVITATION TO MICHAEL CAESAR, GRENADIAN DEPUTY PERMREP TO UN, AND GAIRY APPROPRIATED IT.

4. BOTH PAYNE AND BULLEN ARE INTELLIGENT, PLEASANT INDIVIDUALS WELL KNOWN TO EMBASSY. (BULLEN IS GRADUATE OF N. IOWA UNIVERSITY, AS IS HIS AMERICAN-BORN WIFE.) THEY ARE, HOWEVER, WITHOUT ANY AUTHORITY. END COMMENT.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT EMBASSY SEOUL ADVISE US OF ANY INFORMATION ROK OFFICIALS MAY BE WILLING TO FURNISH OR EMBASSY CAN OTHERWISE ACQUIRE, REGARDING GAIRY'S PURPOSES AND ACTIVITIES.
BRITTON

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